



The Omen

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None, so we're going to your house
to blow away your mom

"Tryin' to undress my past 'til it's nekkid,
won't stop Flavor from sellin' no rekkids."
-Flavor Flav

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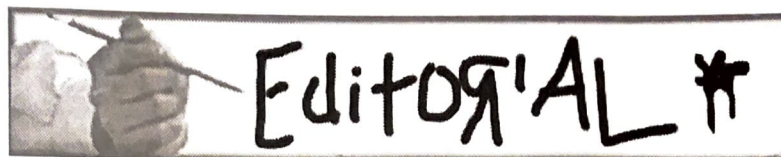
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Policy Box!

The Omen accepts from any member of the Hampshire community. We will not edit anything you write, as long as you are willing to be responsible for what you say. Libel, which we personally find amusing and entertaining for countless hours is just not able to be printed in this forum.

Submissions, which includes just about anything involving the Hampshire community in some way (news, opinions, artwork, etc.), are due on Saturday nights at 8:00 to the editor of the section in which you wish to appear, or to Ben Sanders (E-307, box 710), Jonathan Land (E-311, box 527), or Dave Wilcox (Mod 56, take a walk to Enfield, you bastards, box 865). We prefer submissions on disk (IBM or HIGH DENSITY Macintosh), although hard copy (on paper, dumbass) is okay as well. Label your stuff well and it will make it back to you with no problem.

So give us your news, commentary, short fiction, comics, satire, poetry, art, bulletins, questions, and anything else you can think of, and your beloved community rag will dish it back 250 times. What better way to be heard?



Confessions of a Lousy MC

I learned a very important lesson last week, and that would be: When someone asks you to do something, make sure that they are relatively competent, and able to handle the thing that they wanted you to help out with. I was asked to host last week's Merrill Coffeehouse. I said yes, because I thought it would be fun, and a good opportunity for me to "perform". Wrong on both counts. I should have been tipped off by a number of things. First of all, I was asked to M.C. three days before the event, which, for all you sticklers out there, is sort of down-to-the-wire for this type of event (I would assume). Second of all, being asked this close to the event would imply two things: 1. The people running it were very unorganized, and 2. I was obviously not the first choice on the possible host list. Another reason why I think the second point is valid is in regards to the conditions in which I was asked to do this. I was asked to host the show as long as I would not have any jokes (or various other humorous material) involving "racial epithets", by a former Omen editor who took issue with just about everything I wrote. SO WHY ASK ME TO BE INVOLVED? It's safe to say that anyone familiar with my "work" (as they obviously were), real-

izes that it involves a very derogatory, offensive, and sometimes vicious sense of humor. Asking me not to do anything offensive is like asking the friggin' Pope not to talk about anything related to the concept of God. Part of the reason I said "yes" to this whole thing is because I couldn't believe that I was asked.

Alright, so I agreed to host this shindig, not really knowing what I was getting myself into. The night of the show was approaching and, much to my disbelief, I heard absolutely nothing about the technicalities of the show from my "bosses", one of whom I still didn't meet at this point, the one who was the main organizer. Of course, one of the two S.A.M.s was brand new so I'll give them the benefit of the doubt, but the other one has been a S.A.M. for long enough to know how to pull off something like this. I kept asking for the list of performers, but was ignored. The first time I saw the list was thirty minutes before the coffeehouse was supposed to start. When I saw it, I thought I was going to lose my friggin' mind.

All it has on it was a timeline with a list of performers that was so sketchy, it looked something from early in Andy Warhol's career. For example: "William &

co. 4-5 piece band" (actually, at my count, there were 6 members), *blues*, " was the first item on the list. Now what could I possibly do with a list like that, besides give myself multiple paper cuts? I knew more of what was going on by looking at the stage. The one thing slightly more ridiculous was the little Post-It™ note (it was white, I never saw a white Post-It™ note before, it was cute) that accompanied the list. It said something like: *M.C., please talk to the people before theygo on to find out how they would like to be introduced*. Now, I'm new at this, but technically, if you are responsible for the assembly of a performance, doesn't it seem logical that you should know, oh..., something about the people performing for you? Why should the S.A.M. who organized this shovel their crap onto me. This was slightly less organized than 3rd graders choosing teams for dodge ball. It was awful. So not only did I not know what was going on (especially when the two S.A.M.s kept changing the length and order of the performances), but since I was the M.C., everyone assumed I was responsible for knowing what was going on, when I didn't have anything that remotely resembled

SECTION HATE

Confessions of a Gamer

Time to take the bull by the horns and geld it like the overgrown slice of veal it is. Time to air the dirty laundry, to put odor-eaters in the combat boots.

[The scene: A dirty lounge in Dakin, filled with scruffy-

looking students, a scattered collection of multi-colored dice, some ragged sheets of paper, and a bag of nachos. Some sodas. The students are looking forward to a good time, but also appear guarded, waiting for an intruder to penetrate the bastion of the lounge. Some waiting. Finally, someone stands up.]

"Hi...I'm Stephanie, and I'm a role-player. (gulp, choke) God...it feels so good to finally get that off my chest."

No. Role-playing is not a twelve-step program. But it might as well be. Perpetually black-listed as the activity of "geeks," "nerds," and "he was pretty quiet, a nice guy, you never would have thought he'd climb up into the bell tower and do something like that..." this fine recreation comes laden with more stigmata than a particularly well-martyred saint.

For example: at Hampshire College, where you can play bongos until the wee sma's and only be considered mildly annoying, those with the urge to indulge in

a bit of D&D, or Cyberpunk, are regarded as repugnant deviants who aren't quite "in touch." Pick up a twelve-sided die, and it might as well be a Pit Viper. In fact, you're worse off than the guy down the hall with the Pit Viper, because at least he's living in staunch rebellion against the Pet Ban, which is a relatively hip thing to do. But the poor sod who graduates from High School, goes off to his "alternative" college, is still told to "Put down the dice—and pick up life."

Well. I've had enough. And while this editorial isn't meant to endorse the donning of plastic guns and the acquisition of such nicknames as "SkullCracker," or "GodBreaker" (some of the adopted appellations around here being much more contrived than those anyway...but I digress...), I would like to take my own tiny stand for the vindication of an enjoyable, amusing recreation. I don't collect "Magic, the Gathering" cards, I don't think I'm a wood elf or rub crystals on my privates, but I do like to roll a few dice every now and then and virtually kill a few orcs. Who knows what sort of actual demon this exercise is purging from my system? It could be you.

Being a role-player is something that takes a lot of personal

adjustment, let alone reconciliation with one's peers. The process, over the years, goes something like this:

1) "Hey, this is cool. So what if I've never kissed a girl (can't get a date to the prom)?"

2) "Yeah, I role-play. I am creative and imaginative. You don't like me? You're boring and I don't care."

3) "Uh...guys? Why don't we skip tonight's session, and, you know, go to that dance. Guys?"

4) "Hmm...my academic career seems to be in the shitter."

5) "Oh, I used to do that. Kind of silly. Moving on..."

6) "D&D? What's that?"

It is at this point that the role-player has been successfully deprogrammed by society. At least, this is a vague replica of the phases I went through, and that I have observed in others. Individuals, or course, are often stranded in various stages of development, some stuck in the same place for years (#3 is particularly painful).

The accepted mode of recovery from this pattern is simply to stop at stage 6, straighten up, fly right, and get on with the facets of your newfound "nor-

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Go Back to F4, Where You Belong

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mal" life. But this is college. Hampshire College. Time to deconstruct. Time to blame society. Time to (shudder) analyze the paradigm.

Like the system that puts people on welfare, I argue that the society that drives role-players underground is the root of this problem—this conflict between wanting to have a good time, and wanting to be viewed as something more than a loon who has all the plotlines to "Deep Space 9" memorized. Role-players are not maladjusted, they are just rooted in something perceived as anomic, a sub-culture, an enigma.

Okay, granted, the ranks of role-players are often infiltrated by actual people who can't relate to the rest of the world, and who utilize the sub-culture as a hide-out. Adversity of course breeding solidarity, these actual "special" folk are accepted into the fold, no small amount of empathy from their compatriots easing their membership.

A comparison: the acceptance of NAMBLA (North American Man-Boy Love Association) by some gay rights groups. Well, not a very good comparison. But you get my drift.

The fact is, while not exactly conventional (and who around here really is, anyway?), I don't think I'm a raving freak dice-

roller with a geek attribute of "10." Okay, I could be wrong. But what I actually think I am, is

someone who occasionally likes to cut loose, either over pool, pitch, or D&D. The differences are minimal—you get together with your friends and beat things to an imaginary pulp.

So, I proffer a new stage of development. #7. Ahem.

"I can now role play socially, I have it under control, and

it's a good way to have a good time."

Okay, so it is a friggin' twelve-step program. So what. They cured that guy in "A Clockwork Orange," right? Right?

Stephanie Cole
Section Hate Editor
The Hampshire Omen

So I Sucked... Shut Up

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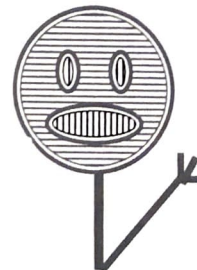
control. I felt awful, and totally annoyed at the same time. At least three people (making the wrong assumption that I was in charge) asked me to be included in the coffeehouse, and there was nothing else I could do except direct them to the people "in charge", who were usually nowhere to be found (at least when I looked for them). I was dealing with all the stupid things that anyone with (that old standby) common sense would have already dealt with, at least days before. I felt as awkward as a cripple on ice.

I was amazed how well the whole thing came off, with absolutely no thanks to the "organizers". Thanks to the tolerance of most of the entertainers, many of whom performed quite well, the show at least appeared to go smoothly, given the usual time delays. Actually, even the performers got dicked around. I know that someone (incidentally, someone I performed with) got left completely out of the sched-

ule, and then bumped around, much more than once.

All that patience and \$1.25 would get me was a ride on the bus (in New York City, of course), so I resigned. Yes, I did realize I was "off" that night, actually, I downright sucked, but given my mood it was the best and the most that I was willing to do. So there. But if anyone has a party or function they need a host for please don't hesitate to call x5236. Thank you.

Jonathan Land
Editor-in-Grief
The Hampshire Omen



For A Good Time, Call x5225

Author's Note: The views and opinions expressed in the following article are not necessarily those of The Omen, Hampshire College, or, for that matter,

Notes From Limboland

the author himself - he might just be making all of this up. Who's to tell? As always, your mom. Now get on with it already. I'm sick of writing in italics.

How do, folks, and be welcome to this week's lovely visit to the land of Limbo.

Okay, let me start right in on our topic for the week. Well, I've been single (again) for about two months now, and I'm fucking sick of it. I hate being single here at Hampshire, because it seems - to me, at least - that, if you're single here, you don't have sex. Period. You become well acquainted with the finer arts of masturbation, of course, but sex just hops on the next train to Dubuque and doesn't even leave a forwarding address. As I said last week, Hampshire and sex make strange bedfellows. Strange, indeed. I have a saying that just seems to sum it all up: Hampshire - the place where all good sex lives come to die.

Let me be totally clear here: I'm talking about sex in the so-called "casual" sense. If you're in a relationship of even marginal standing, you (hope-

fully) don't have to worry about this. But if you're single, sex just doesn't even really exist.

Sex? What is that?

Exactly.

I don't know why it is this way; I just know that it is, and that it sucks. Sure, the whole AIDS epidemic has put a damper on the notion of casual sex - the 80s saw the death of the "free love" era because of the crisis - and I'm sure a lot of Bible-thumping conservatives out there are happier for it, but, hell, if you use protection, the risks are cut down considerably. And, besides, I don't think that's really the cause here at Hampshire; hell, we all suffer from the "immortality complex", don't we? Death seems so far off in the distance that it doesn't even really cross our minds. That's why car insurance rates are so friggin' high for people our age. That's why so many of us smoke.

Death? What is that?

Exactly.

But I digress. I think the problem with sex on this campus has two causes: incest and thinking too much. By incest I mean that because this campus is so damn small, and because we are such an oh-so-diverse community (in some ways, at least), we all tend to form small cliques - concentrated, intense groups of friends - and sleeping with these people in your clique would probably cause some weird, fucked-up tension. By thinking too much I'm referring to the tendency of

Hampsters - Hampshire men, in general, but it also affects a lot of the women here too - to be way too cerebral; because of the politics on this campus, no one wants to offend anyone else with blatant sexual desires, or they don't want to "hurt" anyone - or themselves - by risking some emotional involvement that can be associated with the act of sexual intercourse, and which may not be reciprocated, by either party involved.

Gah! It's just stupid. Sure, I don't believe that sex should be necessarily divorced from any and all emotional involvement - that would be trivializing it - but this is just fucking ridiculous. Sex is *not* the end-all, be-all of human relationships; it doesn't have to mean *everything*. I mean, come on! We are the first species to *enjoy* sex, to raise the sexual act above the mere necessity of propagating the species. Sex is one of the things that sets us apart from the rest of the animal kingdom (there's also that whole brain thing, but we won't get into that now). So let's just stop thinking so goddamn much and fuck. Campus-wide orgy. Oh, come on, it'll be fun. I'll bring the condoms. Hell, I've been stockpiling them for a while now, I should have enough.

I'm sorry. I'm just bitching. I'm a tad frustrated right now. Oh, well, I'll get over

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I'm Ben...A Flatter, Taller Deniz

hey. my name is ben, and it looks as though i am the new music editor, and from now on, i will not be writing in all lower-case letters, and i will use proper punctuation....Anyway, Deniz has moved on to California, so my friend Jon Land asked me if I wanted to step in and take over the music section (a little nepotism never hurt anyone). Two reviews....

NEW RADIANT STORM KING: *AUGUST REVITAL*. (grass)

New Radiant Storm King released their third album, *August Revital*, last semester, so it's not really all that new. Sorry, but I haven't bought anything recently, and, besides, a late review is better than no review, right?

I didn't think a band could do much better than NRSK did on their brilliant 1993 record, *Rival Time*, but with *August Revital*, this group of Hampshire grads proved me wrong. All the great parts of *Rival Time* are still here—fucked up rhythms that sound completely natural ("Froglegs"), incredible drumming ("Backdoor," and anything else, for that matter), and beautiful instrumentals ("Zelda"). Added to this list of positives is the addition of drummer Elizabeth Sharp's vocals on 3 of the albums 12 songs—the kick-ass

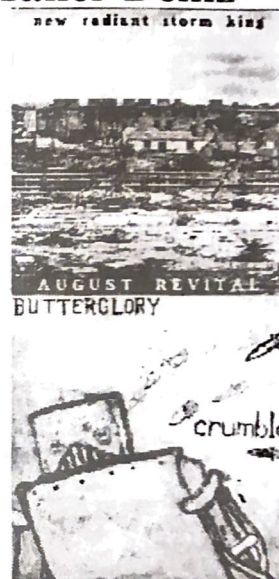
"Go Back and Start," "Misdirected Energy," and "St. Louis Born Again."

August Revital, I guess, could best be described as a mellow but powerful collection of dissonant pop songs, along the lines of Versus, which seems to be popular these days. No one, in my opinion, does it better than NRSK. Check out tracks 1, 3, 4, 6, 9, and 12 for a hoot 'n' hollerin' good time.

BUTTERGLORY: *CRUMBLE*. (merge)

This is another cd that's been out for a while. Live with it, please. Well, these days Pavement pretty much rule indie pop, and it goes without saying that they will inspire a legion of copycats doing the same thing half as well. I guess detractors might say that this is exactly what Butterglory is doing. I don't really think so, though.

The guy, Matt Suggs, has a voice a whole hell of a lot like Malkmus, but he seems to be able to sing better, like on track 6, "Trapped," when he rattles off a



false chorus that I would consider *really* cheesy if it were done by anyone else. Debby Vander Wall, the other half of Butterglory, sounds like the girl from Heavens to Betsy, except Debby can sing...and sing well.

Overall, *Crumble* is a good album. If you are into that Pavement thing, you should really enjoy these minimalist pop ditties. Yet another great release from Merge.

Ben Piekut

Horoscopes

Aquarius (Jan.21 - Feb.19):

You've realized one important thing this week, you're dispensible

Pieces (Feb.20 - March 20):

Run home fast, the day you read this is the day after I did that cute baby sister of yours. Oh, and pay attention to family matters this week.

Aries (March 21 - April 20):

What's wrong with you? You're a mess, get your act together, and maybe you'll at least be respected by small children and retards who don't know any better.

Taurus (April 21 - May 21):

Bull. Huh...You're

mammy's like a bull, she's exciting and wild for a few years, then she's just meat.

Gemini (May 22 - June 21):

You might think that new guy is weird, but he can blow half of U-Mass any given night. Pucker up and show me what you can do.

Cancer (June 22 - July 23):

It's so obvious, so obvious, yet you will know too late. For shame.

Leo (July 24 - Aug. 23):

You'll get something from someone, sometime.

Virgo (Aug. 24 - Sept.

23):

You will wake up, you will go to class, you will eat lunch, you will work, you will eat dinner, you will watch TV, you will go to sleep. Next week will be the same. A few hundred weeks later you will not have to go to class anymore. A few hundred weeks after that you will no longer have to work. A few hundred weeks after that you will not have to wake up.

Libra (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23):

You're a lousy M.C., and a worse lay.

Scorpio (Oct. 24 - Nov.22):

How dare you take three books out of the library, when there are children around the world who can't even read.

Sagittarius (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22):

Go to SAGA early for dinner. If you don't there will be a long line, especially if you're vegan.

Capricorn (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20):

I hear the vegan meal in SAGA kicks ass tonight. Check it out.

Jon Land

Oooh...Josh So Horny

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it. But I am serious about what I've said: we should stop thinking so much. You can think yourself into an unending loop of fears and justifications so easily. There's a time for thought, and a time for action, and we all have to learn the difference.

Well, that's it for this week. Hope you've enjoyed it, and I hope you're getting laid. Of course, that would almost-certainly mean you weren't single . . . no, no, stop that, Josh! Anyway, if you've got anything to say to me (or any sexual favors to profer . . . bad

Josh, bad Josh!) I live at E-306, my extension is 5225, my box is 0021, or you can email me (jobF92@hamp.hampshire.edu). Or, better yet, write an article for The Omen. Our esteemed editor, Jon Land, would love ya for it, and I'm sure you could get some sex out of the bargain (bad Josh, bad Josh).

Well, that's it kiddies. Come back next week for more pointless ravings. And remember, friends: keep your feet on the ground, but keep reaching for the stars.

Thppth.

Josh Brassard

For a
subscription, write
to box 527